

TRIBUTE TO JEFF KIGHTLINGER

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the long career of public service provided to the people of Southern California by Jeffery Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, who is retiring after a 15-year tenure.

I would like to take a few moments to reflect on what an extraordinary leader Jeff has been not just for Southern California but for the whole State. Like Jeff, I care deeply about our water future. For years I have turned to him for his always wise counsel on how to solve the next challenge. Over these many years, I have come to view Jeff as a friend and to value our friendship. I have also learned to value equally his leadership abilities.

The treacherous politics of California water and the immense obstacles to getting anything done are legendary, but Jeff has always been up to the task. Jeff is not only one of the smartest people I know, but he has unparalleled ability to strategize how to approach a complex water negotiation. He has built deep and trusting relationships with many of the key players, not only in California but throughout the Colorado River Basin. Knowing the other parties as well as he does, Jeff is able to map out where there is the possibility of an agreement. He then is able to work steadily and patiently over months and years, gradually removing the obstacles until the parties can finally come together.

Many of Jeff's greatest accomplishments have come in guiding major changes within the Colorado River Basin, helping to collaboratively negotiate landmark pacts among a truce among 7 States, two countries, and 10 Native American tribes. These include the Quantification Settlement Agreement, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, significant revisions to the U.S.-Mexico water treaty, innovative storage programs in Lake Mead, and the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan. This has laid a solid foundation for longer term solutions to be negotiated over the next several years. Jeff has helped forge Metropolitan's partnerships with agricultural districts that have replaced litigation with cooperation.

If you evaluate a leader by the results they accomplish, what Jeff has achieved in preparing Southern California for drought is extraordinary. In a time when much of the California and the West is desperate for water, Southern California stands out for how well it is prepared. Millions of acre feet of water in storage ensures that the region can weather this drought even if it lasts for several more years.

It took a whole suite of actions for Jeff and Metropolitan to get to this place. Knowing that the climate is changing and droughts will worsen, Metropolitan has invested, planned, and prepared, resulting in record water storage, reduced water usage in the re-

gion, and unprecedented drought resiliency. This didn't happen by itself. Metropolitan's conservation programs, including \$350 million in turf removal incentives, transformed the Southern California landscape as Southern Californians embraced conservation as a way of life and permanently lowered water demands. Metropolitan has also launched the Regional Recycled Water Program Advanced Purification Center, a 500,000-gallon-per-day demonstration facility that could ultimately serve as one of the largest recycled water projects in the Nation.

Under Jeff's leadership, Metropolitan weathered the great recession and stabilized its finances while investing billions in restoring its aging conveyance system and improving its water treatment methods, setting a national example for how an agency can meet its infrastructure challenges. His record of environmental stewardship includes installing solar power at Metropolitan's water treatment plants and leading the organization's first efforts to address climate change. Through apprenticeships, recruitment, and promotions, Metropolitan was able to transfer the specialized knowledge of graying workforce to a new, diverse generation of water leaders.

No history of 21st century water in California and the West would be complete without acknowledging his contributions. Jeff has been an invaluable resource to myself, my staff, and those of numerous other Members with his expert analysis and advice that has informed our legislative work. His knowledge and counsel will be greatly missed. I ask our colleagues to join me in congratulating Jeff Kightlinger on his retirement and thanking him for his long career of public service to the people of Southern California.●

RECOGNIZING RUSTIC ROOTS ON SECOND

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I will recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize a woman-owned small business, Rustic Roots on Second of Pikeville, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Located in downtown Pikeville, Rustic Roots on Second opened its doors in 2015. After graduating from the University of Kentucky, founder and owner, Maura Minix, wanted to provide a place for Kentucky artisans to showcase and sell their work. Maura, who grew up in Prestonsburg, KY, saw an opportunity to set up a shop in neighboring Pikeville. She established Rustic Roots on Second, providing a retail outlet for Kentuckian and Appalachian artisans.

Today, Rustic Roots on Second continues supporting and promoting small businesses and artisans in eastern Kentucky. Over 30 local vendors sell their

goods at the store, ranging from food and textile goods to artwork and furniture made from used bourbon barrels. Maura's mother, Brenda Minix, is a key part of the operation, working as store manager and serving as the "face" of the business around town. Customers are regularly greeted by name and treated according to the golden rule. Rustic Roots on Second also serves as an event venue, renting out its shop for celebrations, fundraisers, and business events. The store works with local artisans to host classes and workshops, rotating offerings to meet community interest. From painting to dulcimer playing, teaching and celebrating the arts is a priority.

Notably, Rustic Roots on Second is a leader in downtown Pikeville's business community. They regularly participate in local and regional events, including the Appalachian Vintage Street Market, Wine-Tasting & Retailgating, and Pikeville's famous Hillbilly Days festival. Rustic Roots on Second is a member of the Southeast Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and is involved with Shaping Our Appalachian Region—SOAR—Kentucky, which fosters entrepreneurship and innovation in the region. They are committed to revitalizing and promoting downtown Pikeville through their support of the Pikeville Main Street Program, Inc.

Like many small businesses, Rustic Roots on Second actively supports charitable and civic organizations. For several years, Maura and Brenda have teamed up with local businesses to host picnics and decorate their storefronts to thank police officers, firefighters, and first responders for their service. They regularly support fundraisers for clubs, churches, and sports teams and have sponsored silent auctions to benefit local schools. Rustic Roots on Second's advocacy and community leadership has been recognized in local and regional publications.

When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, Pikeville rallied together to support Rustic Roots on Second. As a nonessential business, Rustic Roots on Second was impacted by the lockdowns. Maura and Brenda adapted, overhauling and expanding their online store to continue serving customers nationwide. As Kentucky reopened, Maura and Brenda worked with local small businesses to ensure downtown Pikeville reopened safely, welcoming locals and visitors alike to their vibrant community.

Rustic Roots on Second is an outstanding example of the critical role small businesses play in uplifting and advocating for their communities. Congratulations to Maura, Brenda, and the entire team at Rustic Roots on Second. I wish them the best of luck and look forward to watching their continued growth and success in Kentucky.●

TRIBUTE TO JASON SUSLAVICH

• Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I would like recognize an important